

I Corinthians

Chapter 9

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again, we thank you for this time. We thank you for your word and for drawing us to you to sit under the ministry of your Spirit ministering these important truths to us. Help us to understand, for without you we have no way of understanding. We commit this time to you and we pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

Chapter 9 is the example, and Paul is using himself, and it is a masterful presentation of what love is.

Remember how we just left off, if it offends the weaker brother, then I have sinned against Christ.

First of all, the position of Paul:

Now I want you to catch this. In Verses 1 and 2, Paul presents his qualifications. And it's like, "What does he have to do that for? Right in the middle of a letter, everybody knows who Paul is!"

Now I am going to present it to you in the sarcasm and in the force in which Paul is presenting it, and some of the things you're not going to like!

His qualifications, he says:

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1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?

Am I not an apostle? Yes!

Am I not free? Liberty! I'm an apostle. I serve Christ. I'm free!

Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Several times! On the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 15, Paul said He appeared to him. Out in the Arabian Desert, Jesus appeared to him. He has seen Jesus Christ our Lord!

Fourthly, are you not my work in the Lord? I mean, if anybody questions somebody's ministry, you say look at the fruit and look at the results. Are there any changed lives? Are they changed and transformed?

2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

He says if I be not an apostle to other people, yet doubtless I am to you: for you are my seal of the apostleship in the Lord.

Now he wants to take those qualifications and apply them to provision:

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

Have we not the authority to eat and to drink?

What he's saying is we have the right to demand, from God's word, that His servants be provided food and drink.

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?

So he's saying "Not just me alone, but also if I have a wife and a family. You got to provide for them too!"

As well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? That's Peter. Yes, Peter was married!

Now here's the sarcasm in Verse 6:

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

Or I only and Barnabas, we have not the authority to forbear working? Or just Barnabas and me, we're the only ones that have to work jobs during the day, and all the rest of the apostles, they get to be supported so that they can minister God's things? But me and Barnabas, we're just the only ones?

Concerning the contributions:

And here's what he's getting at. He uses three examples.

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Who goes to war at any time at his own charges?

Now that would be a good one. Sign up with the Army today but you better get a second job because when you get off duty, we're not going to give you any money for it. That doesn't make sense!

Secondly, who plants a vineyard, and does not eat of the fruit thereof? Either by the selling of it or the actual product itself.

Or who feeds a flock, and does not eat of the milk of the flock?

Those are the three examples.

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

Say I these things as a man? or does not the law also say?

K.V.

I Corinthians 9:9 Deuteronomy 25:4

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

For it is written in the law of Moses, in Deuteronomy 25:4, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn.

They take the oxen down, and they have this circular place where they hook the beam to the ox and make him go around in circles, and he treads out the corn and smashes down and separates the chaff and the wheat.

Well, what happens if you don't feed him? You're going to have one dead oxen, and nobody's going to do the work!

So he says does God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

Or does He say *this* altogether for our sakes? Yes, for our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: he that plows shall plow in hope; and that he that threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

A farmer doesn't go out to plant a field and say "I don't care if there's any crop or not. It's a beautiful day and I just like to get out and work!"

You're looking for the harvest. You're looking to eat from the labor.

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:11

So he says about his participation:

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, that is planted spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your material things?

So we'll deposit spiritual things. We'll serve you with spiritual things, so is it any big deal that you minister to us with the material things?

I like the sarcasm in Verse 12:

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

If others be partakers of this power, or authority over you, are not we rather more?

Now I know that there are those in the ministry that abuse the money thing. They are always talking about money. There are those in ministry that have abused the finances for the Lord's work.

What he's saying here is "Who in life has authority over your money?"

When you go to the gas station and pump gas, do you have to pay for it? Do you pay for your home and your utilities? All these people have authority over you. They're providing a service for you and you are paying for it.

He says shouldn't we rather more? By now you should be "ticked!" by now, you should be saying "Here we go, what's the punchline?"

But remember what the subject is, knowledge ministered by love. He just ministered knowledge to us, Old Testament, New Testament, and he's even going to quote Jesus.

But he says, nevertheless we have not used this authority; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

When he came to Corinth, he stayed with the tent trade so that he could minister the gospel free of charge because he didn't want to hinder the gospel.

But of course after he left, false teachers came in, and the false teachers came in with "health and wealth" doctrines, and the Christians in Corinth gave these false teachers all their money.

Well, that got Paul mad!

He says we came in and we worked with our own hands so that you wouldn't be offended at the responsibility of what God says in His word about supporting those in the ministry, because we rather have you hear the gospel.

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But these false teachers come into town and you give them all your money! He says forgive me for even doing that to begin with!

His instruction in Verse 13 and 14:

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of *the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

He says do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the holy things in the temple? Those would be the Levites, the assistants in the temple.

And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Those would be the priests.

Whatever sacrifices the people brought, they would put the sacrifices on the fire for them for their sacrifices, but what happens to the food after that?

The people leave and the priests get the food, that's how they ate!

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:14

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Now that's pretty authoritative I would say!

So he's basically saying that if you were meeting at a church tonight and the pastor were to stand up and tell you that he's going to teach you scripture and show you authoritatively what God says about supporting ministry. And it would be just like the word says.

And you're probably saying to yourself "Oh boy, here we go again. He's just trying to get money out of people!" But as soon as you leave there, you're probably going to go somewhere and spend money. Do you know why? Because nothing is free!

Just try walking out of a store and not paying for something. We know what's going to happen. But if someone in ministry stands up and says do you know what the bible teaches?

Those who preach the gospel are to live from off the preaching of the gospel.

But listen to this in Verses 15 through 18, tremendous scripture!

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done for me:

This would be like me presenting this material to you to point out what Paul is teaching so that it puts the thought in your mind that "I want money!"

Paul says I am giving you knowledge. And then he says that love says I will not use any of those things. And I didn't even say this so that you would do it to me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:16

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of:

Here's why:

For necessity is laid upon me; a compelling has been placed upon me. Yea, woe is unto me, if I do not preach the gospel!

What he's saying is that it doesn't have anything to do with money. God is compelling me to do this. I have to do this.

What if there's no money in it? Oh well!

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:17

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the *gospel* is committed unto me.

For if I do this thing willingly, that is voluntarily, I have, present tense, a reward:

This is one of my favorite verses. You might disagree with it, and I know there are many pastors and ministers that disagree with it, but if I voluntarily and willingly wanted to be in ministry and get a paycheck for it, that would be my reward!

I'd stand before the Lord and he would say "Hi, how's it going?" and I would say to Him that I spent 50 years serving you, and He would say to me "Well, you made a million dollars, so you got your reward!" Nevertheless, enter in.

Paul says, but if it's against my will, it's not my desire, it's not my ambition, it's not my goal in life, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

Why? Because it's not him. If God was not compelling him, if God was not moving him to preach the gospel, he wouldn't be doing it!

18 What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

He says what is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, so that I abuse not my authority in the gospel.

There are many people in the ministry that need to be challenged, especially those on the television that continuously say we need more money.

I am often tempted to call in and tell these ministers to go out and get a job. Most of these ministers are pulling in a minimum \$150,000 dollars a year, some much more, and their ministry is running out of money.

Well, I say go get a job! Your ministry saves \$150,000, and you just continue to preach the gospel. If you're running out of money, go and sell one of your multi-million dollar homes or your private jet and use that money where it needs to be used, not on yourself.

But you know, that doesn't go over too well with these ministers!

Now the position of Paul:

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

For though I be free from all men, yet I have made myself the slave unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, I became as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

To those that are without law, they don't have the law, I became as one without the law, yet not without law of God, but being under the law of Christ, that I might gain them that are without the law.

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:22

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

To the weak I became weak.

Can you imagine the apostle Paul with all of his knowledge and his relationship with the Lord, and he comes upon a weak brother that doesn't know Old Testament from New Testament, and Paul becomes like him on his level.

Paul doesn't say "Hey fellow, do you know who I am?" That person wouldn't even know that you've got the apostle Paul standing right there in your midst.

Paul became weak with the weak. He didn't bowl them over with knowledge and all this power stuff. He came down on their level. He made them feel welcome. He had fellowship with them.

He says I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

He says I do this so that I can participate with you in the gospel.

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:24

His preparation:

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

Know you not that they which run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

That is Paul's preparation. Many times he used athletic terms to talk about the discipline of his life, his focus, his goal in life that we'll get to in a second.

He says but you run as if you're obtaining the prize. And you are by the way, in heaven!

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

And every man that strives for the mastery, or discipline, is disciplined and controlled in all things.

Obviously, if you've ever been in sports, you know, unless you have a natural ability, you have to be disciplined in what you eat, how much sleep you get, and how much you exercise.

Now they do it, and he's talking about the colosseum games, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown;

They get this little wreath that weaves around your head and dies out in a couple of days. They go through all of that just for that?

But we, an incorruptible crown. This is eternity with Christ and the crown He has to give.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly;

He's running the race with certainty. He knows the goal. He knows the focus, and he knows the purpose. He knows where he's going and he knows what he's doing.

He's not uncertain. You see Paul out running around the track and you say "Hey, Paul what are you going to do? Are you going out for track or something?" I don't know. "Why are you running?" I've got to get in shape and I've got to stay healthy. "For what?" I don't know. "Good idea!"

He says I so run, not as uncertain; and so I fight not as one beating the air.

Have you ever seen shadow boxing? Sometimes they put a light behind you and your shadow is on the wall, and you are shadow boxing with the shadow to get the moves down!

He says I'm not shadow boxing. I know who my opponent is. I'm not practicing, I'm actually involved in the contest.

M.V.

I Corinthians 9:27

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

But I keep under my body, and I bring it into subjection:

When he says I keep my body under, the Greek phrase is "I beat my body black and blue," boxing terms!

When you are disciplining your body for a contest, you're actually punishing your body and putting it through pain to get it ready.

To bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

The word castaway is an athletic term that means disqualified.

Can you imagine the judge on the judges' stand, and after you worked for 6 months or whatever it is just to get that little crown for your head?

You want to beat everybody else and be in the best shape that you can, and the judge sees you make the turn and you cut into somebody else's lane. Disqualified!

Paul says I keep my body in subjection, so that after I preach to others, I'm not disqualified because of the actions of my flesh.

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You see, there's two aspects about serving Christ. Number one, is the Spirit of Christ in us ministering to others, and the control of the flesh, so that that influence is not pushed away by people that have received Christ through us.

It happens all the time. We talk truth, but we act like everybody else does!

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Thank you again for your word. It's so powerful and so deep and so rich with principles about life, the way you designed life to be. We want to be that wise person, not the fool that keeps walking around and walking into all of the traps.

We want to be filled with the wisdom of Christ to understand life, and to understand how Satan wants to occupy the attention of our mind so that we cannot fellowship with, nor receive a changed and transformed life through the hearing of the word of God.

We pray that as we fellowship with you, and pray, and read and think about the things we have learned, that your Spirit would bring these things to mind and help us to walk and live a life of wisdom because it is but a short time. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, Amen!